

CHAMBER of COMMERCE

EASTERN CONNECTICUT

1910 - 2011 | SUPPORTING BUSINESS

February 23, 2011

On behalf of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, I write to urge your support of Raised Bill 1024, an Act Modernizing the State's Telecommunications Laws. Now, more than ever, Connecticut must eliminate those barriers that are preventing business investment and job growth in our state.

It is no secret that jobs have been hard to come by for Americans over the past few years. The effects of the "Great Recession" are far and wide, bringing hardships to small businesses, homeowners and employment rates. Eastern Connecticut has fared no differently. From Ashford to Woodstock to New London, our small businesses and local communities have suffered. If we are going to move forward as a state and nation, we must first look at what has hindered growth in the past.

Connecticut has one of the strictest regulatory regimes in the entire country, which has contributed to the state's stagnant job growth for the last 20 years. Before the recession, many other states chose to ease regulations in efforts to entice businesses to invest more. In almost every case, fewer regulations led to more economic growth, more jobs and a better quality of life.

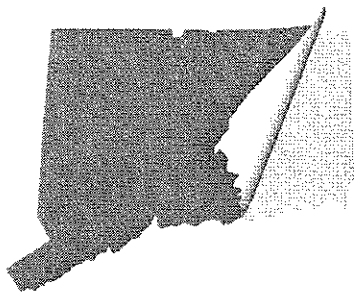
We find ourselves at a crossroads: as a state and as a nation. Are we to remain content with zero employment growth while our state's spending continues to rise, or will we take action to make Connecticut an attractive place to do business? Our 1,600-plus members in Eastern Connecticut count on us to work towards securing and enhancing the economic vitality of eastern Connecticut. As "the voice of business" for Eastern Connecticut, the prospect of doing nothing seems ludicrous to us. So too is the prospect of continuing the same path of regulation and inflated taxes that has kept Connecticut in the same stagnant economic condition it has been in since 1990.

President Obama emphasizes embracing "common sense rules of the road that strengthen our country without unduly interfering with the pursuit of progress and the growth of our economy." While this statement addressed to the entire nation, federal lawmakers and regulators, it rings especially true in Connecticut.

We have the ability to make Connecticut a haven for businesses, both small and large. To achieve this, we must not add any more regulations, taxes or laws that would inhibit businesses from carrying on their normal activities in our state. In fact what we must do is to scale back the most onerous and outdated of these regulations.

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An Act modernizing the State's Telecommunications Laws would eliminate those outdated and over burdensome regulations that have stood in the way of investment and job growth. Eliminating these regulations will not impact customers and won't cost the state any revenue. Eliminating these outdated rules could free up resources for businesses to invest in infrastructure and grow jobs.

It is imperative for the growth and progress of Connecticut to closely examine regulations already enacted, and eliminate those that are most intrusive and most responsible for keeping our economy stagnant over the last two decades.

The Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut has supported balanced economic development and growth for over 100 years. We need the cooperation of our state lawmakers and regulators in continuing to keep the Nutmeg State competitive, and strengthening Eastern Connecticut as a great place to live and do business.

Other states are building world-class infrastructures and pulling themselves out of financial stagnation while Connecticut has sat idly by, watching our neighbors attract investment, jobs and income away from our state. It is time for us to eliminate the factors that have caused this, beginning with our regulatory framework. Again, please support Raised Bill 1024, "An Act Modernizing the State's Telecommunications Laws."

Tony Sheridan
President & CEO